

LUNA JIMÉNEZ SEMINARS & ASSOCIATES

Personal Transformation
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United We Serve

A 1,001 Ways to Help -
www.serve.gov
On June 22nd, 2009, President Obama launched United We Serve, a campaign designed to encourage all Americans to volunteer this summer in the arenas of health care, energy independence, education, and community & economic reform. As part of this initiative, the government created www.serve.gov.

This resource site enables you to search for volunteer opportunities, register a volunteer project, and read about how people around the country are discovering new and creative ways to contribute to their communities. Whether it's building trails, teaching children how to read, or supporting a local food bank, this site is a great place to get inspired to serve in your own way. Be sure to click on the toolkit link where

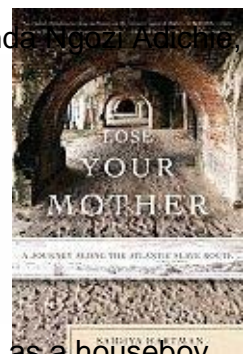
BOOK REVIEWS

Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The second novel by acclaimed author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half a Yellow Sun* is a marvelously written account of a volatile time in Nigeria. In 1966, the Igbo people, decimated and hungry for independence, seceded from Nigeria to form the nation of Biafra. *Half a Yellow Sun*, the emblem of Biafra, tells the story of this tumultuous period through the voices of intriguing characters such as: Ugwu, an adolescent boy who leaves his rural village to work as a houseboy for Odenigbo, a professor with strong hopes for Nigeria's independence, Olanna, Odenigbo's lover, and Kainene, her twin sister. As their lives intersect and their stories unfold we are invited to explore the unique overlay of politics with the intricacies of human relationships. Adichie offers us a realistic portrayal of the strong tug of love and war.

Adichie, who grew up in Nigeria and attended medical school there for two years before moving to the United States, skillfully interweaves descriptive language that brings the physical landscape to life with references to the political and cultural climate of Nigeria in the late 1960s. "They went past a sign, ODIM STREET, and Ugwu mouthed street, as he did whenever he saw an English word that was not too long. He smelled something sweet, heady, as they walked into a compound, and was sure it came from the white flowers clustered on the bushes at the entrance. The bushes were shaped like slender hills. The lawn glistened. Butterflies hovered above." Adichie's language is as rich as the motivations and experiences of her characters.

Half of a Yellow Sun is a tremendously moving book that offers us a window into the brutal reality of the civil war that raged across Nigeria for three years. Adichie's characters offer a complex cross-section of the people directly affected both by the violence and



you'll find materials to help you design your own service project.



Women Make Peace-

www.praythedevilbacktohell.com
A brave and compelling film, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* chronicles the extraordinary actions of a group of women who succeeded in helping to bring peace to their homeland of Liberia. Armed only with white T-shirts, Muslim and Christian women came together to stage an ongoing non-violent campaign for peace which eventually led to the exile of warlord President Charles Taylor and the election of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first ever female to hold a political head of state position in Africa.

The civil war in Liberia lasted from 1989 until 2003. This period of brutal violence and instability involved many attempts by foreign backed rebel armies to attack and overrun the government of warlord president Charles Taylor. In 2003, the women of Liberia joined forces to decry the continued violence and demand peace. They gathered in a public market in Monrovia to pray for peace and strengthen their message. This courageous movement culminated in a sit in during stalled peace talks in Ghana. Their perseverance and commitment to changing the course of their country resulted in the talks moving forward and the eventual cessation of violence.

The website for this film offers video clips, information about upcoming screenings,

the earnest struggle for cultural independence.

Lose your Mother by Saidiya Hartman

Saidiya Hartman spent 1997 traveling through Ghana, tracing the original slave routes in a quest to piece together not only her family's history but also the lasting impacts of the slave trade on modern day Africa and America. "To lose your mother is about losing your identity, your language, your country, and that's the way they speak of it in West Africa. So, it's about those losses that haunt us, those ancestors who we know but can't name. We feel their presence but they're without names for us" (NPR Interview). It's this haunting presence that inspired Hartman to search for herself, her family's history, and the large scale impacts of the slave trade that are still present in our world today.

This book is an academically-inclined memoir written with the poetic beauty of a novel. Hartman combines artfully sculpted descriptions with hard hitting commentary about her experience of feeling unmoored in Africa and America. Upon arrival in Ghana, she is greeted with the word "Obruni" which means white stranger, a term that will follow her for the next 12 months as she takes a journey that is fraught with many confusing turns and dead ends. In this quote, Hartman summarizes the Obruni experience, "When you really really realize you are not African,' one expatriate admitted, 'it's the loneliest moment of your life, and if you can withstand that, you can make it here. It goes on being lonely, and it's how you adjust yourself to that loneliness that matters, not how you adjust to Africa."

From her position of researcher and personal explorer, Hartman learns to claim the "slave" as she travels from dungeons to prisons to pens to forts to castles to auction blocks. As she writes, "My generation was the first that came here with the dungeon as our prime destination, unlike the scores of black tourists who, motivated by Alex Haley's *Roots*, had traveled to Ghana and other parts of West Africa to reclaim their African patrimony. For me, the rupture was the story. Whatever bridges I might build were as much the reminder of the separation as my connection. The holding cell had supplanted the ancestral village. The slave trade loomed larger for me than any memory of glorious African past."

This deeply authentic book has the power to alter the ways in which we think about the impacts of slavery and its lasting legacy on not only African Americans, but also on the globe. Reading Hartman's powerful and painful year of healing in Ghana is an invitation to shift your perspective and alter your understanding of the terms home, family, and connection. *Lose Your Mother* boldly asks us to face the experience of the global slave trade that remains for many of us unknown, unspoken and unhealed.

background information about Liberia, and profiles of the leaders of this groundbreaking peace movement. The film itself is an impressive collection of footage, including that of the women meeting with Charles Taylor, collected in a country that is working hard to recover from the economic, civil, and technological devastation that is the result of so many years of war. By watching this movie and passing it along to others, you will help to ensure that the world remembers this extraordinary example of just how powerful the collective voice of women can be.

Upcoming Events:

Take part in our powerful public workshops! Follow the links below for more information on how to register:

Join LJS in Barbados! September 23rd, 2009

"You Don't Know What You Don't Know: The Facilitator's Path to Authentic Cross-Cultural Practice"

Facilitated by Nanci Luna Jimenez, CPF[©],
Barbara J. MacKay, CPF[©] and Shoshanna Cogan
International Association of Facilitators Caribbean and Latin America
Conference Training Workshop

Early Bird Registration Deadline August 22nd

To view the preliminary program, Click Here

[Register Online Now](#)

Join LJS in Chicago! April 20-21, 2010

"Transformational Alliances: Building Authentic Cross-Cultural Collaborative Relationships"

Facilitated by Nanci Luna Jimenez, CPF[©],
Barbara J. MacKay, CPF[©] and Shoshanna Cogan
International Association of Facilitators Caribbean and Latin America
Conference Training Workshop

[Register Online Now](#)

www.lunajimenezseminars.com